

March 13, 2014

Public Health Committee

Dear Public Health Committee,

I strongly urge you to support HB-5330, which bans the use of pesticides wherever children can be exposed.

I know that you have heard a lot of testimony against HB-5330. One of the major arguments that you have heard is that the chemicals used in these pesticides are safe. That argument is, in fact, the weakest of all. We do not know that these chemicals are safe. They have not been properly and thoroughly tested. The tests that are performed on them are conducted by researchers hired by the chemical companies themselves. Only limited tests are performed, and those are generally for carcinogenicity. These chemicals are registered by the EPA, but that does not mean that the EPA considers them safe. Out of the 80,000 + chemicals currently in use in the US, the EPA has tested only 200, and out of those 200, the EPA has regulated the use of only 5.

The laws that are in place regarding product safety—including the use of chemicals—address immediate, mortal harm. These laws do not take into consideration effects that will result in 10, 20, 30 years down the line. We need HB-5330 to make the public realize how harmful these chemicals can be (and indeed, are). People assume that because they can buy Round-Up, etc., off the shelf that they are therefore safe. These products contain many of the same ingredients or ingredients that are equally harmful. People typically believe that the government would not allow products that would harm them. They don't know and they don't understand the dangers. Laws regulating the use of pesticides would heighten their awareness.

There is indeed proof that the chemicals used in products do harm wildlife. Anything containing the suffix "icide" is one clue: anything that contains "icide" kills, and not just the intended target. "Icides" have unintended consequences; they kill other things as well. What affects one part of the environment has an effect on other parts of the environment. We must be mindful of that. Products which claim to kill their target do not just kill their target; they *always* result in collateral damage. Note the military language here; citizens must understand what these kinds of chemicals are truly about: death and killing.

We cannot continue to treat our environment as a giant testing lab, and await the results. This kind of approach leads to untold damage, and above all, harm to our children and future generations. We must show greater respect, care, and consideration for our children, for adults, for animals, and for the earth.

I am very happy to hear that HB-5330 has been proposed; this is a step forward. I would be very happy to talk with about my concern (indeed, I have left messages with my representatives, and with you); you may call me at any time at 203-387-1172. I urge you with all my heart and mind to pass HB-5330 and ban toxic lawn pesticides where children can be exposed.

Thank you for your attention to this very serious and important matter.

Sincerely,

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